

**Downtown Business District**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 17, 2014**  
**330 Main Street, Middletown, CT**

**Attendees**

Diane Gervais (Chair)	Pamela Steele (Business Owner)
Jennifer Alexander (Commissioner)	Cathy Duncan (Chamber of Commerce)
Valerie Scribano (Commissioner)	Michiel Wackers (Director of Planning)
Gary Nagler (Commissioner)	Tom Marano (Planning Department)
Marc Levin (Commissioner)	Bruce Driska (Deputy Director of Planning)
Mike DeSena (Police Department)	Geen Thazhampallath (Director of Parking)
Ann Marie Cannata (Buttonwood Tree)	Lisa Melaven (DBD Office)

**Minutes**

- Motion made by Marc Levin to approve
- 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gary Nagler
- Minutes accepted.

**Treasurer's Report – Mike DiPiro / Not available**

Marc Levin delivered message, the sidewalks are now being cleaned once a week, due to the winter weather.

- Financials approved
- 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Financials accepted

**Maintenance Report – Tom Ford / Not available**

Just a re-cap from Marc Levin, the sweeping of the sidewalks will be once a week throughout the winter season.

**Beautification – Diane Gervais**

The planters have been completed with seasonal greens, for the winter, and will need zero maintenance until early spring. It was agreed “Buds and Blossoms” did an outstanding job this past year with the planters up and down Main Street, with the exception of the winter plantings. The DBD along with Buds and Blossoms will work together to improve and enhance the look of each planter for next year's winter season. This will include more seasonal greens, berries, branches and color for a richer and fuller look.

**Marketing –**

Marc Levin is planning on bringing a proposal to next month's meeting with some new ideas.

**Police Report – Mike DeSena**

The police presence has been better on Main Street. Diane Gervais has been pleased to see police officers coming in throughout the course of the day/evening shifts.

The Chamber of Commerce has made a request for the officers to stop in more often, especially during the “Holiday on Main” event. For next year the police officers who work the beat of Main Street, will need to be made aware of “Holiday on Main” event. An area of concern is the rise of panhandling and intoxicated patrons during the “Holiday on Main” weekends.

The warming house that is currently being used at the Holy Trinity Church is going to move to The South Church. It is open from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am. There are five warming centers in the State of CT. The concern at hand is people are being brought to Middletown to the warming center, and once morning comes they are left to hang out in businesses along Main St.

Jen Alexander’s thought is to visit our legislators, and address the need of more urban type towns to open up more warming centers, not just shelters.

### **Public Works – Bill Russo /Not available None**

### **Parking Report- Geen Thazhampallath**

New kiosks are being installed today at Mellili Plaza. Individual place cards with maps will be passed out to individual businesses and customers today. The public works department is working to hang the informational flags. There will be availability to use coupons and businesses to pay for customer parking through the parking department.

The Parking Lots – The signage for free weekend parking in general has been going well, the change has been good. Geen will be looking into the possibility of the print on the parking meters to be larger.

### **Planning – Bruce Driska, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation and Development, Director Michiel Wackers, Tom Marano**

Special guest, Bruce Driska came in to discuss the Community Block Grant. The planning department works closely with the Finance Department and Mayor in placing and disseminating these funds, collaborating with many stops along the way. They are looking at jobs, affordable housing, and low to moderate income level housing, education and social services. Primarily, we are focused with agencies and the twelve senses tracks. These funds are handed out through a committee. An information packet was handed out regarding the Community Block Grant. In July, the planning department will be starting a new five year development cycle, and all ideas are welcomed. Tom Marano, had an update regarding the 89 Broad Street project. This is going to be a very exciting time with the potential of bringing in more of the young to moderate business class people to the downtown area.

Global design publishing has been hired to update the “Business and Community Guide”.

This person will attend the January 2015 meeting to discuss advertising options.

Community video’s will be updated this Spring with the downtown businesses (10-15 segments)

A couple of new businesses opened in Main Street Market to include First Twelve Sporting Clothes and Verse-A-Tile. Also Palm Nails is under new management.

Tom has been working tirelessly with a company to improve the “gig network” for the Middletown area.

**North End Report-**  
**None**

**Chamber – Cathy Duncan**

Holiday on Main Street has been a great success! There has been great air about this event. The Safari Animals and handlers have been a great addition this year. The Chamber of Commerce is planning on taking out a full page ad in the Middletown Press, to thank all sponsors, vendors and volunteers in the participating in the “Holiday on Main”.

**Chair Update – Diane Gervais**

Holiday Gift Bag Giveaway: The program has gone very well. We distributed the bags at the November Chamber Breakfast where it was well received.

For the past three Saturdays we have had 2-6 Coginchaug High School, DECA volunteers out on Main St in their blue Santa hats welcoming consumers to Main Street and handing them the bags. The response has been extremely positive. We had very good involvement from the merchants and restaurants. I think it will be something that we can expand upon next year.

Gift Card: Amato’s is fully functional selling the cards. It has proven to be quite simple and so far not a problem even during our busiest time of year.

Shane and Lisa are continuing to work with our businesses to be sure that they are fully functional, Shane is visiting all of the businesses currently to be sure they are not experiencing any issues.

Bookkeeper: Bob, Lisa and I met with a possible replacement for Bob, but decided it was not a good fit. Bob has found us another person who I interviewed on the phone and I do believe will be a good fit. Bob, Lisa and I are scheduled to meet with her on Jan 5<sup>th</sup>. Bob will handle transferring of info to her. She will work out of our office mainly and her fee is \$35 per hour. She has her own bookkeeping service of 20+ years, Bob has worked with her before.

Motion to adjourn by Marc and approved.

